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THE
CONFESSION
OF OUR
CHRISTIAN FAITH,

COMMONLY CALL'D
The CREED of St. Athanasius,
briefly Paraphrased.



L O N D O N :

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who give them away.)



T H E
P R E F A C E.

*T*HE following Paraphrase of the Athanasian Creed having been out of Print for many Years, it may not be improper to give it another Edition; especially at this time, wherein the † Sabellian Heresy begins to revive, and the Eternal Sonship of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is attempted to be explain'd away by a modal Distinction only of the three Persons in the Godhead; whilst

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† Sabellius held only one single Subsistence in the Godhead, and no more; and he allowed only a Trinity of Names, as of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and that founded in a Trinity of Offices, as that the Father is the Creator of all Things; the Son the Redeemer of Mankind; and the Holy Ghost the Sanctifier of the Church; All which is referr'd only to the Agreement and Consent of the Persons.


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others with equal Absurdity, are labouring the Establishment of Tritheism. Against which Errors there cannot be a greater Preservative, than a right Understanding of the Catholic Truth as contained in our Creeds. And we hope, it may be of Service to such well-meaning Christians, as, for want of sufficient Knowledge in Divinity, are apt to be offended with the Language of our Church, many of whom are observed to sit down in their Seats, or else to be silent, when this Creed is repeating; which Irreverence is productive of very ill Consequences, and loudly calls for a Reformation.

T H E



T H E
CONFESSION of our *Christian Faith*,
commonly called, *The Creed of*
St. Athanasius, briefly paraphrased.

 hoseever will be saved,
or would fix his Hopes
upon Eternal Life, must
consider, that before all
things, or in the first Place, it is ne-
cessary (Faith ever going before Practice)
that he hold, profess and maintain the
Catholic Faith, the Faith which was
once deliver'd to the Saints, and has been
since handed down to us by the univer-
sal, or Catholic Church.

Which

Which Faith except every one who is of competent Understanding, and hath not wanted any necessary Means of Instruction, do keep whole, without taking from it, and undefiled, without adding any impure Mixtures, he will be guilty before God of a very great Offence in thus abusing and misapplying his Talents: and if he persist in it to the last, unrepenting, without Doubt he shall perish everlastingly.

And now, to avoid any Mistake in a Matter of so near Concernment, it will be proper to declare what the fundamental Faith of a Christian is:

The Catholic Faith is this, that we worship one God in a Trinity of Persons, and a Trinity of Persons in the Unity of one God.

Neither confounding the Persons, by reducing three Persons into one Person, nor dividing the Substance, by making as many different Substances as there are different Persons.

For we are to believe that there is one Person of the Father, another Person of the Son, and another Person of the Holy Ghost: three Persons really distinct, and not in Name only.

But then we are to believe, that the Godhead or Divine Substance, of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one, both in Kind and in Number, by an unspeakable Union: And that the Glory of each Person is equal to the Glory of either of the other two, and the Majesty of all the three is coeternal, having no Beginning nor End.

All the essential Attributes of the Deity are common to the three Persons; in respect whereof, we are to believe that, Such as the Father is, such also is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost.

To instance in Particulars: As the Father is uncreate, So is the Son also uncreate, and the Holy Ghost uncreate.

Again,

Again, As the Father is incomprehensible, So is the Son also incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible.

And again, As the Father is eternal, So is the Son also eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal.

And the whole three are *distinct*.

And yet, because they are *distinct* only, and *not divided*, having one and the same eternal and inseparable Duration, common to all three, they are therefore, not three Eternals, but one Eternal.

As also, and for the same Reason, there are not three Incomprehensibles, nor three Uncreated, (since they are not *divided*, neither has any of the Persons any other Uncreatedness or Imensity, beyond what is common to all three) but the whole three Persons are together one Uncreated, and one Incomprehensible.

So likewise, the Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty, and the Holy Ghost Almighty: Three Almighty Persons distinct.

And yet, because they are *distinct* only, and not *divided*, and every one has all the Almightyness, and the same Almightyness as the three have; they are not three Almightyies, but one Almighty.

So also, the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God: Three Divine Persons distinct.

And yet, because they are *distinct* only, and not *divided*, and every one has as much Divinity, and the same Divinity as all the three, they are therefore not three Gods, but one God.

So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, and the Holy Ghost is Lord: Lord, Lord, and Lord *distinct*, and of Dominion equally supreme.

And yet, because they are *distinct* only, and not *divided*, and every one has all Power and Dominion, and therefore the

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same Power and Dominion which all have; they are therefore, not three Lords, but one Lord.

For like as we are compelled, or obliged, by the Christian Truth or Verity laid down in Holy Scripture, to acknowledge every Person distinctly, and by himself, to be God and Lord; so are we forbidden by the Catholic Religion, founded on the same Scripture, to say, there be three Gods, or three Lords.

Having set forth the *Union* of the Persons, we next consider their Distinction: For, tho' the Persons be *undivided*, and have the same common *essential Attributes*; yet because one Person has *Properties* which another has not, and one Person is not another; they are therefore not one Person, but three Persons.

To begin with the Father, he is made of none, neither created, nor begotten. He is of *none*; neither made, nor created, nor begotten of any.

[II]

The Son is of the Father, and of him alone: (which distinguishes him sufficiently from the Father *who is of none*, as well as from the Holy Ghost, who is not of the Father alone :) But then he is not made, nor created by the Father, but begotten of him.

The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son too: But he is neither made, nor created, nor begotten by either of them, but proceeding from both. So that as the three Persons are indifferently distinguished from all other Beings, or Persons, as being *unmade* and *uncreated*; they are likewise distinct from each other, on account of these three personal, incommunicable Properties, or Characters, *viz. Unbegotten, Begotten, and Proceeding.*

And so there is one Father, whose more peculiar Character is *Unbegotten*, or *Unoriginate*; and there are not three Fathers: And there is one Son, whose peculiar Character is *Begotten*, and there

are not three Songs: And there is one Holy Ghost, whose peculiar Character it is to *proceed* in a particular Manner, not three Holy Ghosts.

And in this Trinity, tho' there be a Difference of Order, a *First*, a *Second*, and a *Third* Person, unbegotten, begotten, and proceeding; Yet none is *afore* or *after* either of the other, in respect of *Time* or *Duration*, none is greater or less than another, in point of *Dignity* or *Perfection*; but the whole three Persons are Coeternal together and Coequal.

So that in all things, as is *afore*-said, to resume our first Position, the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped: Distinct without Division, united without Confusion.

He therefore that will be saved, must thus think of the Trinity, in Opposition to such as endeavour to deprave, corrupt, or destroy this true and sound Notion of it.

For

Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting Salvation, that he also believe rightly, and not after the perverse Glosses, and Corruptions of Heretics, the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For the right Faith is, that we believe and confess, that our Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God, is not MAN only without being GOD, (as some Heretics have pretended;) nor GOD only without being MAN, (as others have taught;) but that he is GOD and Man together, both in one, one God-man.

He is GOD as being of the Substance of the Father, begotten before the Worlds, or before Time: and he is Man, as being of the Substance of his Mother, born in the World, born in Time.

Perfect GOD, having the Divine Nature intire; and also perfect Man, having the human Nature intire in both its
Parts;

Parts; of a reasonable Soul, and human Flesh subsisting.

Being thus possess'd of two Natures, *Divine* and *Human*, he is of Consequence equal to the Father, as touching his Divine Nature, or Godhead; and, at the same Time, inferiour to the Father, as touching his human Nature, or Manhood.

Who, notwithstanding, although he be God, and Man also, yet he is not therefore, upon our Principles, two Christs, as the *Appollinarians* suggested to be the Consequence of our Doctrine; but he is still no more than one Christ.

I say, One, not in the *Appollinarian* Sense of one Christ; not by Conversion of the Godhead into Flesh, (a monstrous Thought to subject the Divine Nature to the Weakness of the human, and to confound both in one) but he is one Christ, in another Sense, and after a different Way; namely by taking

ing the Manhood into God, (that is to say) by assuming the human Nature into a personal Union with the Divine.

One altogether, not by Confusion of Substance Divine and human, but by a close and entire Union of two distinct Substances in the Unity of one and the same Person.

For, to use a familiar Comparison from what we perceive in ourselves; as the reasonable Soul and Flesh, (two distinct Substances, and so remaining even after their Union) is one Man, so God and Man (two distinct Natures, and so remaining after their Union) is one Christ.

Who, in his human Nature, suffered for our Salvation, descended into Hell, rose again the third Day from the Dead.

He ascended into Heaven, he sitteth on the Right Hand of the Father, God Almighty; from whence he shall come to judge the Quick and the Dead.

At

At whose Coming, all Men shall rise again with their Bodies, and shall give Account for their own Works.

And they that have done Good, or have lived good Lives, shall go into Life everlasting: and they that have done Evil, or have lived bad Lives, and have not repented, shall go into everlasting Fire.

This is the Catholic Faith, which except a Man believe faithfully, having no Part with Heretics, who deny, pervert, or deprave it, he is guilty of a Breach of Trust, and of mis-employing his Talents, to the great Scandal of Religion, and the Subversion of Souls; and if he persist in such wicked Purposes unrepenting, he cannot be saved in the ordinary Way, or upon the standing Terms of Salvation laid down in the Gospel.

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